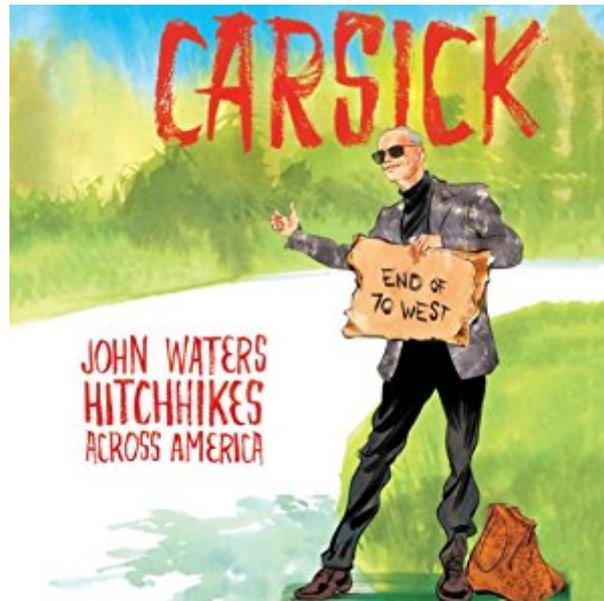


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# Carsick: John Waters Hitchhikes Across America



## Synopsis

A cross-country hitchhiking journey with America's most beloved weirdo. John Waters is putting his life on the line. Armed with wit, a pencil-thin mustache, and a cardboard sign that reads "I'm Not Psycho", he hitchhikes across America from Baltimore to San Francisco, braving lonely roads and treacherous drivers. But who should we be more worried about, the delicate film director with genteel manners or the unsuspecting travelers transporting the Pope of Trash? Before he leaves for this bizarre adventure, Waters fantasizes about the best and worst possible scenarios: A friendly drug dealer hands over piles of cash to finance films with no questions asked, a demolition-derby driver makes a filthy sexual request in the middle of a race, a gun-toting drunk terrorizes and holds him hostage, and a Kansas vice squad entraps and throws him in jail. So what really happens when this cult legend sticks out his thumb and faces the open road? His real-life rides include a gentle 81-year-old farmer who is convinced Waters is a hobo, an indie band on tour, and the perverse filmmaker's unexpected hero: A young, sandy-haired Republican in a Corvette. Laced with subversive humor and warm intelligence, *Carsick* is an unforgettable vacation with a wickedly funny companion - and a celebration of America's weird, astonishing, and generous citizenry.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

FROM PAGE 224 of "CARSICK" "I see one of the cute gearheads from yesterday in his pickup pull into the gas station. He's still racing around, hopping in his truck, peeling out to drive the short distance to the other gas station. What on earth is he doing? He must have seen me by now, too!

I've been hitching out in front of where he works for two days, but he still resists any greeting. I'm so bored and frustrated I pretend I have a crush on him in an inappropriate Jane Bowles kind of way." I was already in love with John Waters' latest literary precis of modern culture, *Carsick*, but the above quoted paragraph on page 224 was the clincher. It speaks to a particular reality of un-reality; being of a particular age of a particular experience of a particular proclivity, standing in full view yet relegated to the sidelines, watching the world race inanely to and fro, feeling dichotomously envious and dismissive, inventing a fantasy context in which one could possibly -- somehow -- become again engaged in life, and yet, knowing that context created from one's own rarefied, recondite frame of reference, a reality of such obscurity -- constructed of a combination of little known nearly lost literary and cultural personal icons, D-list and down on their luck faded entertainers, and porn star legends and tropes thereof long disappeared -- is a context unlikely to be shared, understood, or, even, accepted by anyone else on this earth. This is a book about being alone. Best case. Worst case. Real case. A clever construct of good fantasy, bad fantasy, and real - un-real life. And all of the versions of all of the stories are lessons in learning to love the encounters that, however briefly, relieve that solitary journey across and through time. Mr.

I love John Waters. I LUV John Waters. I think he's written some amazing and hilarious essays, and I agree with the jacket copy: He's a national treasure. But this book? Oh, man. Really, I'd give it one star, but I just can't do that to John Waters. What did I learn from this book? That John Waters has been rich and famous for so long that's he's shocked by what Americans eat and where they shop; that he's so picky about what he eats that he refuses to eat anything at any hotel breakfast buffets as he crosses the continent (white bread and sugary cereal shock the auteur of "Pink Flamingos"); also, that he is a bit of a jerk to his assistants (plural); also, that he never puts his T-shirts in the dryer, and he loves *Commes des Garçons*. I found the fiction stuff boring, because, really, who cares about made-up fantasy car rides? I flipped forward to get to the nonfiction bit, but the fiction just went on and on and on, filling up two-thirds of the book. And guess what? The nonfiction bit was not interesting, either. I'm sure when the book was pitched to publishing houses, they imaged he'd get up to zany, madcap adventures as he hitch-hiked across the country --- visiting oddballs' homes, seeing strange sights, spinning off insights into the American soul (or American heart of darkness), or anyway making us laugh a lot his typically unusual observations. Instead, in his dry telling, he doesn't stop to look around even for a second, but hotfoots it across the continent as quickly as he can. He stands in the rain a lot, and panics, and feels sorry for himself. That might have been humorous, except there are no stories being told, really, no insights being offered. He

declines invitations to socialize with the people he meets.

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